

William Clark's World: Describing America in an Age of Unknowns

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the watershed conflict of the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, and the opportunism among noble families who crossed national lines in their quest for survival, wealth, and positions of authority in the New World.

The documents that Ekberg has collected, translated, and edited are a welcome gift for those interested in the history of the Midwest. They are invaluable for understanding the social and political history of the Illinois Country, revealing the material conditions and culture of settlers in the region, the interactions between Europeans and Native Americans, and the role of slavery in the territory.

One quibble with the book is that in the biography portion Ekberg resorts to Wikipedia for some background information and even one quotation (16 n.16; 82 n.26). Although the information is likely accurate and verifiable in other more academically accepted sources, these citations will likely be jarring to those readers who have been conditioned to be suspicious of the site.

William Clark's World: Describing America in an Age of Unknowns, by Peter J. Kastor. Lamar Series in Western History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011. ix, 360 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

Reviewer David A. Walker is professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. This fall he is teaching an undergraduate seminar: Exploring the American West.

William Clark is emerging from the historical shadow of Meriwether Lewis. Since 2004, readers have seen, among others, two biographies, a study of Clark as Indian diplomat, a compilation of letters to his brother Jonathan, and now a book that places Clark in the forefront as Americans learn more about the trans-Mississippi West.

According to Peter Kastor, an initial key to understanding the West was the 1814 publication of Clark's hand-drawn *Master Map of the North American West*. It was based on a review of existing maps, his expedition field notes, his surveying and celestial navigation skill, and conversations with native people. "The result was a map of unprecedented detail and technical accuracy that continues to amaze cartographers to this day" (151). Sources describing the West, in addition to maps, included travel narratives, regional histories, and portrait and landscape paintings. The descriptions influenced federal land policy, Indian relations, and decisions of individual settlers.

The highly accurate work of colonial surveyors and mapmakers showed topography, county boundaries, and land grants along the eastern seaboard. Kastor points out that depictions of the trans-

Appalachian West were, by contrast, much simpler, often reflecting an absence of geographical knowledge to convince people they were accurate. John Filson, an early settler and land speculator, exemplified several individuals who helped create a vision of expansion and conquest of Indian land. His *History of Kentucke* (1784) included a somewhat imaginative map with generous boundaries for an area that was then politically part of Virginia. Although depicting the region as an empty, savage place, this work became an early and very important example of promotional literature that lured settlers into the "Near West" as vanguards of a civilized society.

Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Thomas Jefferson expressed growing frustration with the lack of specific boundaries. Encouraged by the president, Congress funded five expeditions to determine what actually had been acquired from France. Jefferson's June 1803 instructions to Meriwether Lewis set an important precedent expressing the "need for cartographic knowledge . . . , demographic knowledge of the residents over whom the United States now claimed sovereignty, and environmental knowledge about the land where Americans might someday live" (90). As Lewis and Clark traveled to the mouth of the Columbia River and returned to St. Louis, Jefferson sent William Dunbar and George Hunter up the Ouachita River while Thomas Freeman and Peter Custis explored the Red River. Zebulon Pike was first dispatched to find the source of the Mississippi River before heading west along the Arkansas River.

Jefferson's explorers kept written records and journals that included maps of the region traveled. They were fulfilling their instructions, but at the same time they knew that the reports would be published for the reading public. Newspaper accounts were often the first source of information about the West for most Americans. Consistent threads appeared through all of these publications: the men diplomatically represented the United States; overcame extreme hardship; portrayed the flora and fauna and the economic potential of the land and its resources; and depicted a land presenting tremendous danger yet great challenges and opportunities. They did not, however, follow the pattern of exuberant boosterism exemplified by the work of John Filson. Throughout these published reports, maps and narrative descriptions depicted a West of vague or nonexistent international boundaries, offering no claim to additional territory.

By the 1820s and 1830s, maps remained the dominant visual representation of the American West. However, a diverse group of individuals contributed to merging portrayals of the West with a public attitude that was increasingly supportive of expansion. Cartographer

and engraver Henry Schenck Tanner produced an atlas placing the Oregon Country within the United States while it was still jointly occupied with Great Britain. Artist George Catlin depicted Indians he was convinced were doomed to extinction. Novelist James Fenimore Cooper portrayed the western landscape in a more romantic fashion, while powerful Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton supported aggressive westward expansion with multiple objectives: sovereignty, commerce, and slavery. Each in their diverse way “successfully convinced thousands of Americans that the West was safe, that the land was fertile, and that opportunities abounded” (253).

William Clark’s historical legacy, his map and journals, remains important. For Kastor, the power of this visual record ingrained the West in the American imagination. Although a somewhat difficult read for a general audience that followed Lewis and Clark through Stephen Ambrose’s *Undaunted Courage*, this is an outstanding scholarly work, based on a thorough reading of a wide variety of primary sources and all the appropriate secondary sources. The narrative is enhanced by numerous illustrations; most valuable are 25 contemporary maps. It deserves its place in the important Lamar Series in Western History.

Ferdinand Hayden: A Young Scientist in the Great West, 1853–1855, by Fritiof M. Fryxell; edited by Richard C. Anderson, Phil Salstrom, and Paul Salstrom. Rock Island, IL: Augustana Historical Society, 2010. xx, 281 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Michael D. Severs is a Ph.D. candidate in the history of science and technology at Iowa State University. He has researched and written about nineteenth-century midwestern state geological surveys.

Ferdinand Hayden is best remembered for his geologic survey of Yellowstone National Park or as director of the U.S. Geological Survey or maybe even for his position as chief medical officer in Phil Sheridan’s army during the Civil War. However, this prestigious career, like most, had its humble and insecure beginnings. Fritiof Fryxell explored those beginnings — the early events and relationships that shaped Hayden’s career — in this monograph on Hayden, which Fryxell originally intended to be the first of many volumes. The posthumously completed monograph explored the ambitions, choices, and direction of Hayden’s early career through extensive quotations of his own letters and writings. Perhaps it is only a quibble, but readers would have benefited from more of Fryxell’s own insights in addition to his extensive quoting from Hayden’s many writings.